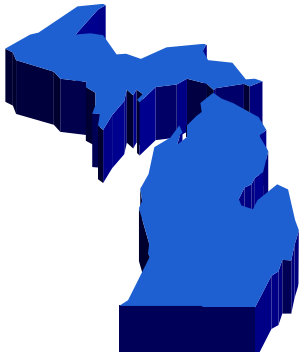


# *The Michigan FAS Web*



*"When spider webs unite they can tie up a lion."  
~African Proverb~*

## **NEW FASD CLINIC TO OPEN IN TRAVERSE CITY**

Finding diagnostic services for individuals affected by prenatal alcohol exposure can be a challenging and burdensome experience. Most pediatricians and general practitioners are not trained or equipped to identify and diagnose conditions of FASD. Ideally, FASD evaluations should be made by a multidisciplinary team specially trained in identify conditions caused by prenatal alcohol exposure. Michigan is fortunate to have several clinics with such specialized teams; however, for families in the northern part of the lower peninsula none of these clinic have been very easy to get to. Many families have traveled great lengths to get a diagnosis. Fortunately, geography will soon become less of a barrier in this region.

The Northern Michigan Children's Assessment Center will soon be open for assessing children for FASD and trauma. The Center will aim to primarily serve families from 21 counties across northern Michigan. The counties to be served are Alcona, Alpena, Antrim, Benzie, Charlevoix, Cheboygan, Crawford, Emmet, Grand Traverse, Iosco, Kalkaska, Leelanau, Manistee, Missaukee, Montmorency, Ogemaw, Oscoda, Otsego, Presque Isle, Roscommon and Wexford. Assessments will take place at Pine Rest Christian Mental Health Services in Traverse City. The first assessment is scheduled for March 25.

The assessment team for the Center is comprised of an MD, child psychiatrist, DO, PhD psychologist, a master's level psychologist, several master's level social workers, two RNs,

educational specialists, and many parents raising children with FASD. This professional team has committed themselves to this project as volunteers. The team members are very dedicated to supporting children and their families in the assessment and treatment of FASD and to making the children's lives the best they can be. The parent advocates on the team have a very important role of providing support to parents whose children are being assessed at the clinic. In addition to the current members, the group is looking to add an occupational therapist and a speech therapist to its roster. The Center hopes to find a significant source of funding to allow them to hire paid staff members in the future.

The Traverse City team received its training from the Southwest Michigan Children's Trauma Assessment Center (CTAC) in Kalamazoo. CTAC began evaluating children for FASD in 2000. CTAC's innovative work in trauma assessments earned them a federal grant that included the opportunity to provide training and mentorship to help establish the Center in Traverse City. The Traverse City team is grateful for the time and expertise provided by CTAC.

The phone number to schedule assessments is 231-943-7795. General questions can be directed to Mary Beth Novak at Catholic Human Services at 231-947-8110. For information on other diagnostic centers in Michigan, go to [www.nofas.org/resource/directory.aspx](http://www.nofas.org/resource/directory.aspx)

## NEW FAS SUPPORT PROGRAM FOR FAMILIES IN MARQUETTE COUNTY

The Marquette General Health Systems' FASD Clinic has initiated an innovative therapeutic program for some of their patients with fetal alcohol diagnoses. This pilot program is supported by grant funding from the Michigan Department of Community Health and is being conducted in collaboration with Willow Farms. Willow Farms is a local equine center that provides therapeutic riding for children with disabilities.

The therapeutic riding program was developed to work on sensory and behavioral issues for children with an FASD. It is also designed to help parents implement strategies to improve management of this disability at home and at school. The program will serve fourteen families over the course of one year by offering several six-week sessions for 4 to 5 families each time.

The first session was held during October and November 2005. At the beginning of the six-week session, four families participated in a planning meeting to identify current problems and determine goals to address those concerns. Some examples of goals were to increase self-confidence and self-esteem, reduce obsessive/oppositional behaviors, and improve cooperation and the ability to follow directions.

The preliminary results from the program are exciting! At the end of the first 6-week session, all families reported a significant improvement in their child's ability to manage their daily schedule at home and at school. An additional, and

unexpected, benefit of the program was the formation of a parent support group among the parents who attended the first session.

One example of the program's success comes from the Niemi family. Prior to participating in the therapeutic riding program, seven year old Zaida Niemi, had a frustrating habit of getting in and out of bed several times a night. That was until Zaida learned that "her pony, Angel" went

into her stall when it was time and stayed there until morning. Now, a brief mention of Angel usually puts Zaida back on track. In addition, Zaida has been able to express that working with Angel has helped her to be brave, patient, and kind. It has also helped her to listen and follow directions. Lisa, Zaida's mom, knows that raising a child affected by FASD is never predictable. However,

Lisa feels because she lives in an area with a strong support system, she can say to the challenges, "Bring it on!"

The next step for the therapeutic riding program will be to determine the sustainability of the improved behaviors. Follow-up family evaluations will be administered at one month and again at 6 months to see if the children continue to show improvement. Ultimately, it is hoped that this pilot program may demonstrate a type of therapeutic intervention that can positively impact individuals with FASD.

For more information, contact Sue Britton at [sbritton@mgh.org](mailto:sbritton@mgh.org).



**ZAIDA AND ANGEL**

## “THE BASICS” OF FASD

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA) FASD Center for Excellence is a Federal initiative devoted to preventing and treating FASD. Their website provides information and resources along with materials that can be used to raise awareness about FASD. An exciting new resource available from the Center is a PowerPoint presentation called, “Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders: The Basics.”

This presentation can be downloaded and the materials can be tailored for your own use. The PowerPoint includes talking points in the notes section of the document to assist you in providing a presentation with the materials. The presentation can be downloaded, converted into overheads or 35 mm slides, or viewed online.

“The Basics” presentation provides the latest and most accurate information on FASD. The material covers six sections.

1. Understanding FASD:
  - Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD)
  - Terminology
  - FASD Facts
  - Cause of FASD
  - FASD and Alcohol
  - Alcohol and Women
  - FASD and the Brain
  - Number of People With an FASD
2. Prevention and risk reduction:
  - Prevention Is the Only Solution
  - Talk About Alcohol Use
  - Who Needs To Know
  - Raise Awareness in Schools
  - Raise Awareness in the Community
3. Symptoms and difficulties for persons with an FASD:
  - Overall Difficulties
  - Primary Disabilities
  - Typical Difficulties
  - Secondary Disabilities
  - Factors Associated With Reduced Secondary Disabilities
4. Diagnosis:
  - Diagnosing Fetal Alcohol Syndrome
  - Differential Diagnosis of Features of FAS
  - FASD and Mental Health Disorders
  - Risks to a Child of Not Accurately Identifying and Treating FASD
  - Risks to an Adult of Not Accurately Identifying and Treating FASD
  - Benefits of Identification and Treatment
5. Treatment:
  - General Issues With FASD
  - Intervention Issues
  - Systems of Care for Persons With an FASD
  - Economic Costs of FAS
6. Outcomes:
  - Strategies To Improve Outcomes for Persons With an FASD
  - Strengths of Persons With an FASD
  - Paradigm Shift

To access the presentation, go to <http://www.fascenter.samhsa.gov/whatsnew/FASDTheBasic.cfm>



## **NEW PSA FROM NOFAS**

On October 28, 2005 the National Organization on Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (NOFAS) held a press conference in Beverly Hills, California to unveil Infinite Power, a new award-winning television public service announcement (PSA) produced for NOFAS by the Los Angeles chapter of Women In Film (WIF).

Infinite Power is now airing in Los Angeles and other markets and NOFAS is working to place the spot on broadcast and cable networks nationally. You can work with NOFAS to have the PSA aired in your local market by contacting Nav Dayanand at [dayanand@nofas.org](mailto:dayanand@nofas.org) or (202) 785-4585.

## **ELECTRONIC ACCESS TO THE NEWSLETTER**

If you are interested in receiving this newsletter by email, please send a message to [sarah.bobo@hotmail.com](mailto:sarah.bobo@hotmail.com).

If you would like to read any of the previous editions of the newsletter, they can be accessed from the State's FAS webpage at [www.michigan.gov/fas](http://www.michigan.gov/fas)

**Michigan FAS Web Newsletter  
6786 Chancery Drive SE  
Alto, MI 49302**